

sure that we were on the leading edge of issues critical to Michigan.

He has guided my office through countless high-profile events and crises: the great recession and auto crisis, the Flint water crisis, several government shutdowns, the COVID-19 pandemic, the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, and two impeachment trials. Through it all, Eric has provided stability and focus—a focus on working in a bipartisan manner to pass important legislation and to make progress for Michigan and for our entire country.

Last week, I was humbled to be recognized by the Center for Effective Lawmaking as the most effective Senator in the 116th Congress. Recognition of this sort does not happen without having an incredible team. Eric played a critical role in helping me enact 10 bills into law—the most of any Senator from either party over the last 2 years.

And I know that Eric will tell you, without a doubt, that there is no “I” in team. As a leader, Eric has focused on hiring talented staff, both in DC and across Michigan, staff that humbly, selflessly, and effectively serve the people of Michigan each and every day. With Eric’s laser focus on what is best for Michigan, together with our team, we have secured record funding to protect the Great Lakes, worked to increase security at our Nation’s borders, expanded apprenticeships and skills training, saved taxpayer dollars, and made the Federal Government more efficient, all the while standing up for Michigan workers, including those working in our auto industry.

Eric is always on the leading edge, and he has distinguished himself through his work with Michigan’s auto manufacturers and automotive stakeholders. In particular, Eric has helped drive policy efforts focused on innovation and emerging technologies so that in the near future, self-driving vehicles will not only be safely deployed and save thousands of lives on our highways but also be developed and built in Michigan and in the United States, creating good-paying jobs for the next generation of workers.

At every step of the way, through all of his hard work, Eric has carried himself with his characteristic enthusiasm and passion. It is only fitting, as an alum of the University of Michigan and a fervent—very fervent—Wolverine fan, he has, and I quote, an “enthusiasm unknown to mankind.” Whether it is policy, politics, casework, or an issue important to constituents, there is no doubt that Eric approaches it with keen interest and with high energy and that he will think through every single possible angle.

But Eric has been much more than just a chief aide. Colleen and I feel incredibly fortunate not only for all that Eric has done to lead my office and deliver for the people of Michigan; we count on him as a confidant and a dear friend.

Eric, you will be missed dearly as you depart for your next endeavor in

the private sector. But I am grateful for what you have built, and I know that it will endure—a culture of teamwork, hard work, productivity, and a commitment to what is best for Michiganders.

Eric, Colleen and I know that you have devoted countless hours to a job that you love while balancing the two most important roles in your life: being a loving husband and a father. I have been proud to watch you celebrate many of life’s milestones over the years, including the birth of your two beloved sons, and I will certainly never forget your eldest son Avi’s birthday on November 4, 2014, the day Michiganders elected me to the U.S. Senate.

Eric, Colleen and I wish you much success, and we hope you enjoy this next chapter with Dena, Avi, and Ethan. Know that Colleen and I will always be thankful beyond measure for your service and for your leadership and that you will forever be part of Team PETERS.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to complete my remarks before the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. THUNE pertaining to the introduction of S. 797 are printed in today’s RECORD under “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

Mr. THUNE. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks before the vote is called.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. And for the information of the Senators, I will speak for about 7 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Thank you.

GEORGIA SHOOTING

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I would like to start by taking a moment to address the awful violence we saw in Georgia yesterday.

Everyone, especially elected officials, needs to not just speak out but to act against this deadly display of hate.

To the victims and their families and to the Asian-American and Pacific-Islander community in Washington State and nationwide, my heart is with you not just today but going forward. I will continue sending a strong message that hate against you must stop, and I will keep working to ensure your safety in light of the terrible surge in hate crimes we have seen in our State and across the country.

NOMINATION OF XAVIER BECERRA

Now, Madam President, I rise today to voice my strong support for Attorney General Becerra to serve as Secretary of Health and Human Services.

After 4 years of attacks on families’ healthcare from President Trump,

after a year of this pandemic ravaging our Nation, the challenges that lie ahead of us, especially when it comes to healthcare, are numerous; they are enormous; and they are absolutely urgent.

The uninsured rate, the drug prices, and healthcare costs have all skyrocketed. Confidence in our public health agencies have plummeted. Already painful health inequities have grown deeper. And this pandemic has absolutely devastated communities and pushed our healthcare system to the brink.

COVID-19 has killed over a half a million people, and that number continues to rise. When it comes to the hard work ahead to not only end this pandemic but rebuild a stronger and fairer country, it is clear we need an experienced leader at the Department of Health and Human Services. It is clear we don’t have a second to waste, and it is clear Attorney General Becerra is the right pick for this job.

His track record shows he has the convictions and the qualifications for the task at hand. As a Member of Congress for over two decades, he has proven himself a skilled legislator who understands healthcare policy. As attorney general of one of the Nation’s largest justice departments, he has proven himself as a leader capable of heading a complex Department like HHS. And throughout all of his work, he has proven himself as a champion for patients and public health.

In Congress, he worked to help more people get quality, affordable healthcare by passing the Children’s Health Insurance Program and the Affordable Care Act. In California, he has fought in court to defend the Affordable Care Act and time and time again has gone to court to fight for patients, like when he won a \$70 million settlement from pharmaceutical companies for blocking cheaper generic drugs from market, when he won a settlement from opioid manufacturers behind the addiction crisis and joined a bipartisan investigation into whether opioids were unlawfully marketed, when he sued e-cigarette companies from marketing tobacco products to children and led a bipartisan effort with the Republican attorney general of Nebraska to protect kids from tobacco imagery, or when he worked to investigate companies and hold them accountable for putting workers at risk by failing to follow COVID-19 safety measures.

Attorney General Becerra has also worked to acknowledge and address issues driving inequities in healthcare. As leader of California’s Department of Justice, he fought in court against the Trump administration rule that undermined care for the LGBTQ community, against the administration’s constant efforts to undermine reproductive healthcare and against its blatant disregard for the well-being of migrant children.

Attorney General Becerra also established a new Bureau of Disability

Rights at his department, as well as a new office focused on environmental justice, including how pollution and public health hazards disproportionately hurt communities of color.

Overall, his record tells a story that is clear, compelling, and persuasive. He has fought against pharmaceutical companies, opioid manufacturers, tobacco companies and polluters and for more affordable, quality healthcare for every patient.

I have no doubt as Secretary that he will put special interests on notice and put patients and public health first and put science, data, and experts back in the driver's seat. And he would also bring an important perspective to this role as a first-generation college student and the first Latino Secretary of Health and Human Services.

He is exactly the kind of leader we need to make sure we make good on the promise of the historic investments we made in the American Rescue Plan to end this pandemic—investments to rapidly scale up testing and tracing and sequencing so we can identify new strains of COVID and slow the spread; investments to quickly and equitably get vaccines into arms, an effort that requires not just making vaccines available but breaking down barriers to access, promoting vaccine confidence, fighting misinformation, and engaging community partners; investments to build our public health infrastructure and recruit and train 100,000 public healthcare workers.

He will also be a valuable partner to Congress as we work to address challenges that predate this pandemic but have been made all the more urgent, like rooting out systemic racism and addressing inequities in our healthcare system, which have made this pandemic so much more damaging and deadly for communities of color; like addressing the mental healthcare crisis, which the trauma of this pandemic has made so much worse; like fighting the opioid epidemic, a crisis which was deadlier than ever this past year; and like expanding access to quality affordable childcare, which has become more difficult for families to get during this pandemic.

When this pandemic is over, we will need a strong leader at the Department to deal with the aftermath and with so many other outstanding issues: bringing down prescription drugs prices; making sure healthcare in this country is truly a right, not a privilege; undoing 4 years of attacks on reproductive rights and ensuring every woman can get reproductive healthcare, regardless of their race or income or ZIP Code or disability; lowering our unconscionably high maternal mortality rate; reversing the alarming trend of rising youth tobacco use; and ensuring the Office of Refugee Resettlement is upholding its welfare mission by prioritizing the well-being of every child in its care, ensuring they are treated with decency and humanity and kindness; and working to place

children with suitable sponsors quickly and safely.

We have our work cut out for us, but in Attorney General Becerra, we have a Secretary of Health who is up to the job. He has the support not only of Democrats but of Republicans, as the Republican attorneys general of both Louisiana and Tennessee have spoken highly of their experiences working with him.

I urge every Senator who wants the Biden-Harris administration to succeed at ending this pandemic quickly, keeping our families safe, and ensuring everyone can get quality affordable healthcare to join me in voting to confirm him.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON TAI NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Tai nomination?

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

(Mr. KELLY assumed the Chair.)

(Ms. CORTEZ MASTO assumed the Chair.)

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 98, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 123 Ex.]

YEAS—98

Baldwin	Grassley	Peters
Barrasso	Hagerty	Portman
Bennet	Hassan	Reed
Blackburn	Hawley	Risch
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Romney
Blunt	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Booker	Hoeven	Rounds
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Braun	Inhofe	Sasse
Brown	Johnson	Schatz
Burr	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	Kelly	Scott (FL)
Capito	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cardin	King	Shaheen
Carper	Klobuchar	Shelby
Casey	Lankford	Sinema
Cassidy	Leahy	Smith
Collins	Lee	Stabenow
Coons	Lujan	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lummis	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Thune
Cotton	Markey	Tillis
Cramer	Marshall	Toomey
Crapo	McConnell	Tuberville
Cruz	Menendez	Van Hollen
Daines	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Moran	Warnock
Durbin	Murkowski	Warren
Ernst	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murray	Wicker
Fischer	Ossoff	Wyden
Gillibrand	Padilla	Young
Graham	Paul	

NOT VOTING—2

Hirono Sanders

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 37, Xavier Becerra, of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Charles E. Schumer, Chris Van Hollen, Michael F. Bennet, Jack Reed, Tammy Duckworth, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jeff Merkley, Christopher A. Coons, Richard Blumenthal, Patrick J. Leahy, Amy Klobuchar, Tina Smith, Brian Schatz, Ron Wyden, Robert Menendez, Richard J. Durbin, Martin Heinrich, Maria Cantwell.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Xavier Becerra, of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 124 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Collins	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Feinstein	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—49

Barrasso	Cotton	Hagerty
Blackburn	Cramer	Hawley
Blunt	Crapo	Hoeven
Boozman	Cruz	Hyde-Smith
Braun	Daines	Inhofe
Burr	Ernst	Johnson
Capito	Fischer	Kennedy
Cassidy	Graham	Lankford
Cornyn	Grassley	Lee